

# Cochin-China.

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Vietnam  
A.W. p. 296  
August 2, 1919

History  
See May 22, p. 1204  
for R.A.J. Annual report

Cochin-China, or "Nam Ky," as it is called in Annamese, is situated in the extreme south of French Indo-China. It is one of the five provinces into which Indo-China is divided. Its area is approximately 47,000 square miles. The population, according to the latest census, taken by the French government, is 3,062,500.

The history of Cochin-China is much the same as that of the rest of Indo-China. Tradition claims that it was first

populated by Chinese. Later it became a part of the Kingdom of Cambodia. In the fifteenth century it was conquered by an Indian tribe called Khmers. In the seventeenth century it paid tribute to the king of Siam, and finally, in 1690, it became an integral part of the Empire of Annam.

French interest in Cochin-China commenced with the nineteenth century. The persecution of French Catholic missionaries, and the murder of the Spanish bishop, Mgr. Diaz,

Hue, Annam, in 1856, led to French military intervention in 1859-60. This resulted in the capture of Tourane, in Annam, and a part of Cochin-China. By a treaty, signed at Saigon, the King of Annam ceded to France the eastern part of Cochin-China. Later, however, the king changed his mind, and annulled the treaty. Again the French government sent out an expedition, and again the Annamese were defeated. Finally, in 1874, a treaty was signed at Hue, by which all of the province of Cochin-China became a permanent French possession.

The inhabitants of Cochin-China are Annamese. They are of the same origin as those who inhabit Tonkin and Annam. It is most probable, as tradition claims, that the Annamese are descendants of Chinese who settled in Indo-China about the fifteenth or sixteenth century B.C. Their traits, characteristics, customs, and religions are much the same as those of the Chinese. In the west of the province there are several towns and villages inhabited by Khmers. They are the remnant of the Khmer tribe, which ruled Cochin-China in the fifteenth century.

The Cochin-Chinese are an agricultural people. Their life is very simple. Their food consists, for the most part, of rice, fish, sweet potatoes, and tea. The women, as a rule, do the farming.

The climate of Cochin-China, being tropical, is warm and humid. The temperature is very high the year around, with little variation. There are two distinct seasons; the wet season and the dry season. The wet season is from June till October, and the dry season is from November till May. March, April, and May are the warmest and most unhealthy months in the year. There is no real cool season, although the months of December, January, and February are fairly comfortable.

Cochin-China is a great rice-producing country. Over 3,000,000 acres are cultivated, and a crop of 1,700,000 tons of rice is harvested annually. The soil is very rich and fertile, and under favorable circumstances yields three crops a

year. Other important products of the soil are maize, tea, coconut, sugar-cane, and betel nut. In the last few years the planting of rubber has become very important. Over 200,000 acres have been planted, and more is being added every year. This industry, though still very young, bids fair to become the most important of all.

Along the line of modern progress in the Orient, Indo-China stands very high. Since the country came under French control, strides have been made towards so-called modern civilization. Cochin-China, being a French colony, has been especially well developed. The means of communication and travel are excellent. There are almost 3,000 miles of first class automobile roads. Two railroads are in operation, one of which, in the near future, will connect Saigon with Hanoi in Tonkin. Three lines are in building. The many navigable riverways are also highly developed.

The post and telegraph system is, of course, the same all over Indo-China. It is supposed to be the best in the East. One can send a telegraph message to any part of the country for two cents a word, regardless of the number of words.

Public education is in the hands of the government, and under the direct supervision of the governor of the province. The province is divided into small districts, called cantons, with a primary school in each. There are two colleges, one at Saigon and one at Mytho, and a number of professional schools at various centers.

The Annamese, unlike the Chinese, do not crowd together in cities, but live more in the rural districts. Consequently,

Indo-China has not many large cities. The largest cities in Cochin-China are Saigon and Cholon, with populations of 65,000 and 180,000, respectively. Of Cholon's population, 80,000 are Chinese. A.W. p. 297 Aug 2, 1919

Saigon is the capital of the province, and said to be the most beautiful and up-to-date city in the Orient. It is the perfect model of a French city. Indeed, someone has said that Saigon is a miniature Paris. Many handsome and palatial public buildings, all of French style and architecture, beautify the city. The streets are large and conspicuously clean. Numerous parks and public squares, adorned with statues and monuments, in honor of men who fought and worked for the conquest of the city and province, add to its beauty, and give it a modern European appearance. Saigon has also the honor of having the largest cathedral in Indo-China.

Commercially, Saigon is the soul of Indo-China. The city is the base for all export as well as import. Her rice market is number two in the world. Over 1,000,000 tons of rice are exported annually. As a shipping center, the city is also of great importance, and has regular steamship connections with ports in China, Japan, the Philippines, Africa, France, Australia, and North and South America.

The people of Cochin-China are not religious. They are nominally, Buddhists, but the majority have no religion at all. This is especially true in places where European influ-

amiy nte is degenerate.. rcrnaps^nownerem uie woria,.ex-  
 .cept.possil.ly, Africa/ is the marriage tie so loose as jt is  
 here. The majority of Annamese have contracted more than  
 one bigamous marriage: 'Tt is considered perfectly corrcct, for  
 á wonian.tò gct up and leave her. husband ánd go to some  
 pnê>else, if-shé does not like him. This.is w.orsc than polyg -  
 myand'isa great problem in missionary work.

U'ás^Protestant mission'field, Cochín-China has beên.sadly  
 •iWlccted'- As far as we'lorow, no Protestant missionary;  
 Ì^atìonVthe na.ivcs h:ts evcr been at.empted.'^Koman  
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 deepe/Systeries of idoiatry than even Buddhism knows: On  
 •the igh-aifir bf the cathedral at Saigon, which is su^Õiêd  
 •{obededica,ei t^irist. \there. is a wooden statue of Mary.  
 Once-we visited-ÏYs church; and we saw hundreds of Arina-  
 n e bow before that woodea figure to woíship. Let no one  
 S \* \* \* because the Roman Catholic Church-is here, the  
 people are gctting the góspei:- NO! The people are tcníold  
 Inor' steeped in ignorance'and superstition after they have  
 beerfbaptiied into the Roman Catholic fold.than they were

b^re: ^--'; - . V - " 'V^rfí- ~£?!Ïffi  
 It pleased God', some years ago; to give to the Christian ~an  
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opened.' Then Hanoi, in Tonkin, and now,-by God's grace,  
 another forward move has'been made by the opening of Sai-  
 gon, in Cochín-China: At our last Indo-China Conference,  
 Mr. I. R.'Stebbins and the writer were appointed to this field  
 for the purpose of language studies and the supervision of the  
 colportage work, with the view of commencing gospel work  
 as soon as possible. We are hoping and praying that by Oc-  
 tober or November next, we shall bé sufficiently avancéd in  
 the languages to be able to.open our first chapel in Saigon.  
 W« are now carefully surveying the city, so that we shall be  
 able intelligently to dec de where to locate "our work.

ì Opportunities in tli^s field are"unparaH'tiCÙ5and almost un-  
 limited. Out from Saigon, abóut two miles to the east, there is  
 a town called Gia Dinh, which; Áyith the district surrounding  
 it, has a population of 140,000. " Nine miles to the south there  
 is the large city of Cholon, with its 100,000 Annamese and  
 80,000 Chinese. Then to tlic north, about twenty four miles  
 •trp the railroad line, is á d.ty with a population of 20,000, and

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lation oí. almost 30,000. On the banks of. the Mekong, u\_p ^  
 which/Mytho is situated, there are several large towns, ^  
 - r r ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ J r o m ^ M,000 to 20,000 each. AU fl^  
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 £ f e province. Shall we no. do our best m pray.ng, g m ^  
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